

**ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
Thursday, March 17, 2022
Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

**7:00 p.m.
Ashford, CT 06278**

Present Judith Austin (Chairman,), Paul Varga (Clerk), Garth Bean, Jesse Burnham, Christina Davis, Angela DeSanto, John Kopec, William Falletti (1st Selectman, Ex-Officio BOF Member)

Guests John Guskowski, Facilitator
Cheryl Baker, Ashford Treasurer
Cathryn Silver-Smith, Selectman
Jennifer Lindsay, representing Ashford Education Association
Amy Capozziello
Mandy Courtois
Kim Johnson
Christine Abikoff, Ashford Exec. Administrative Asst.
Janet Bellamy

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call and Seating of Alternates

Roll call was carried out.

3. Communications

Ms. Lindsay, representing the Ashford Education Association, discussed several questions posed to the BOE by members of the BOF at an earlier meeting. She discussed class sizes. She also spoke about teacher salaries generally and noted that salaries of our teachers compared with other similar district teacher salaries are lower. She feels Ashford does not pay competitive teacher salaries. She explained that more detailed reports, concerned with other questions, will be provided to the BOF as soon as possible.

4. Public Comments (3- minute time limit per speaker) - none

5. Approve Minutes of Regular Meeting Thursday March 3, 2022

MR. BURNHAM MOVED AND MR. VARGA SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE AS WRITTEN THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOF MEETING MARCH 3, 2022. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Approve Minutes of Special Meeting Thursday March 10, 2022

MR. BURNHAM MOVED AND MS. DESANTO SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE AS WRITTEN THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING MARCH 3, 2022. MOTION PASSED WITH ONE ABSTENTION FROM MR. KOPEC.

6. Approve Minutes of Regular Meeting March 10, 2022

MR. BEAN MOVED AND MR. VARGA SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOF MEETING MARCH 10, 2022 AS CORRECTED. MOTION PASSED WITH ONE ABSTENTION FROM MR. KOPEC.

Corrections p.2, 7. a. line 4 should read...weed whacking... / p. 2. 7. e. 4th paragraph, line

2 ...citizens... / p.3 2d motion (not seconded) made by Mr. Varga and last word should be heard.

8. Selectman's Update

A brief communication was given.

9. New Business

a. Board of Selectmen Budget Recommendations

b. General Budget Discussion

c. Final Budget Adjustments

The revised BOS budget, increase reduced as suggested and approved by the BOF at the 3/10/2022 regular meeting, had been supplied to the members. \$32,000 has been cut, and Mr. Falletti reviewed the cuts page by page for the members. \$14,000 of this cut has come from the DPW. It was explained that the Capital Improvement Budget is funded by the CNR and other sources so that taxes are not involved. The BOF does approve the Capital Improvement projects. Although the Capital Improvement Budget is a five year plan, the votes are for projects for just the next fiscal year.

The proposed budgets under consideration for fiscal 2022-3 are:

General Government Budget, \$3,841,715.00

Board of Education Budget, \$8,337,427.00

Capital Improvement Budget, \$1,001,455.00

Region 19 Budget, \$3,558,470 (not approved yet, could go down per Ms. Baker)

After discussions that included the increases to the town with these proposals, property revaluations, car taxes, Fire Dept. budget, mill rate, general inflation, food and fuel costs, cost of living, etc. motions and votes were taken.

10. Acceptance of Proposed Budgets

MS. DESANTO MOVED AND MR. BEAN SECONDED A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET PRESENTED 3/17/2022, \$3,841,715.00 AND PRESENT IT FOR PUBLIC HEARING. MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR VOTING YES: DESANTO, BEAN, VARGA AND BURNHAM, AND TWO VOTING NO: AUSTIN AND KOPEC.

MS. DESANTO MOVED AND MR. BEAN SECONDED A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET PRESENTED 3/17/2022, \$8,337,427.00, AND PRESENT IT FOR PUBLIC HEARING. MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR VOTING YES: DESANTO, BEAN, VARGA AND BURNHAM, AND TWO VOTING NO: AUSTIN AND KOPEC.

MR. VARGA MOVED AND MR. KOPEC SECONDED A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET PRESENTED 3/17/2022, \$1,001,455.00, AND PRESENT IT FOR PUBLIC HEARING. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

11. Approve Notice of Public Hearing and set Date of Public Hearing

MR. VARGA MOVED AND MR. BURNHAM SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING AND SET THE DATE AS APRIL 5, 2022. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

12. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Please send any topics to the Chairman.

13. Remarks for the Good of the Board

Thanks were given to all members by the Chairman and by Mr. Falletti. All efforts for the town are appreciated. Working with neighboring towns has been proceeding and will continue in the future as a valuable way for each town to benefit.

14. Adjournment

**MS. DESANTO MOVED AND MR. BURNHAM SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN.
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AT 8:28 P.M.**

*Respectfully submitted by,
Valerie B. Oliver, Recording Secretary
3/17/2022*